

Asian American Students Association and Comparative Literature DUG Speaker Series-
Spring 2008
<Re-examining Politics, Identity and Culture>

April 1st (Tuesday) - Wilson 102, 4pm

Myung Mi Kim

Myung Mi Kim is at the forefront of the postmodern poetry scene, having written books of poetry such as *Under Flag* and *Dura*. At a time where poststructuralist theories have obliterated stable identities and the authority of language, Kim manages to incisively convey these uncertainties and misgivings through the medium of verse. She is currently a professor at SUNY-Buffalo with a special interest in translingual/transcultural poetics. Much of her work speaks to a post-modern Asian American and Asian immigrant identity and her life reflects a similarly fragmented history; she was born in Seoul, South Korea but grew up moving from town to town among predominantly white communities in the Midwest.

April 2nd (Wednesday) - Wilson 101, 7pm

Leigh Jenco- "The Orientalism of Anti- Orientalism"

Leigh K. Jenco is currently Postdoctoral Research Associate, Political Theory Project, Brown University. In July 2008, she will take up a position as Assistant Professor of Political Science, National University of Singapore. She is currently working on a book manuscript, tentatively titled *Founding and Paradox in the Political Theory of Zhang Shizhao*, and has begun work on a new project, which examines the "Western Learning" (xi xue) discourses of late Qing and early Republican China to explore Sinocentric perspectives on cross-cultural borrowing. Her primary research area is modern Chinese political thought, but her other interests include classical Confucianism, postcolonial theory, and interpretive methods. Her publications include "'What Does Heaven Ever Say?' A Methods-Centered Approach to Cross-Cultural Engagement," *American Political Science Review* (November 2007).

Movie screening- *Secret Sunshine* (2007) – **MacMillan 115, 9pm**

Secret Sunshine is a devastating account of a woman's mental turmoil. Lee Shin-Ae (played with scalding intensity by Jeon Do-Yeon: Best Actress, Cannes) moves to her husband's home town Miryang--the name means "Secret Sunshine"-- after his death in a road accident. Estranged from most of her own family and her in-laws, she's determined to make a fresh start. She sends her young son Jun to school and opens a piano academy, fending off romantic overtures from a car-workshop owner (Song Kang-Ho, *The Host*) and "spiritual" overtures from a local Christian group. Then tragedy strikes again and she falls to pieces; her life becomes a vortex of hatred and forgiveness, faith and nihilism, composure and hysteria.

April 3rd (Thursday)-Wilson 102, 5:30pm

Discussion about *Secret Sunshine* with Professor Rey Chow (Comparative Literature), Professor Marinou Pourgouris (Comparative Literature) and Professor Zachary Sng (German Department) will follow the movie screening on Wednesday night.

- Professor Chow studies 20th century Chinese fiction, both canonical and popular; postcolonial theory and fiction; interdisciplinary analyses of film; and critical and cultural theory. She is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities and is the author of many books, including *Woman and Chinese Modernity Writing Diaspora*, *Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, and many more. Her work has been widely anthologized and translated into major European and Asian languages.
- Professor Pourgouris has extensively researched and written about 20th century Modern Greek Literature in a comparative context. He has completed a book-length study on the poetic metaphysics of Odysseus Elytis in relation to European Modernism. His research is informed by psychoanalytic criticism and philosophy. His current project examines literature between Mediterranean contact zones.
- Professor Sng works on 18th century Britain and Germany literature, with a particular focus on the relationship between literature and philosophy in the Enlightenment and Romanticism. His other interests include rhetoric, semiotics, and aesthetics. He has just completed a book-length study on error in the Enlightenment.